

Customer Care Effectiveness and the Performance of Telecommunication Industries in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the importance of customer care unit, the retention of service users and the volatilities of Tele-communication companies in Nigeria. This paper attempt to find the relationship between customer service and the patronage of the service users of Telecommunication companies in Nigeria. This article is based on data obtained from survey and literature in the context of customer's service delivery, marketing and customer's retention. Recommendations were made amongst which are; provision of proper guidelines on customer service delivery, training and retraining of customer care representatives and taking into consideration the complaints by the service users and improving on the quality of service delivery. This recommendation is a result that marketing focuses on customer needs, want, preference, attitudes and lifestyles.

Key Words: Customer service, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer care effectiveness.

Introduction

Marketing has focus on the customers' needs, wants, preference, attitudes, lifestyles, etc. Indeed, marketing concept suggests that the logical place to start the search for new product ideas are the customers need and wants (Oyeniya & Joachim, 2008). Thus, corporation's commercial success is highly dependent, at least in part, on the extent to which she could integrate her knowledge about the customers

with her own intellectual, creative capacity and skills (Oyeniya & Joachim, 2008). Consequently, Competitive advantage is secured through intelligent identification and satisfaction of customers' needs better and sooner than competitors and sustenance of customer's satisfaction through better customer service tools (Oyeniya & Joachim, 2008). No business organization can survive without building its customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Ojo, 2010; Shawn, John, Sarah, Charles, &

Sherry, 2006). Customer retention is very crucial in the telecommunication companies as companies seeking for customers' loyalty. Loyalty of customers is dependent of the service quality delivery by the telecommunication industries in Nigeria. Customer's satisfaction holds the potential for increasing an organization's customer base, increase the use of more volatile customer mix and increase the firm's reputation (Brady, Cronin, & Brand, 2002). The achievement of customers' satisfaction can be done through customers' service. Customer service is the provision of service to customers, before, during and after a purchase (Oyeniyi & Joachim, 2008). There is also rising issues of service quality delivery, poor call quality, ineffective customer care service, top up problem issue and general dissatisfactions on the quality of services rendered by communication industries in Nigeria. This conceptual paper is intended to address the issues and problem of quality service delivery in communication industry in Nigeria.

Service quality

"Quality is an elusive and indistinct construct often mistaken for impressive adjectives like goodness, shiness and weigh" (Parsuraman, Valarie, & Berry, 1985:41). Recent marketing research regarding customers' attitudes toward quality services delivery has concentrated on

perceived service quality (Bolton & Drew, 1991). Perceived service quality is defined as the customer's assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of the service (Zeithaml 1988). Parasurama et al. (1985, 1988) consider that a customer's assessment of overall service quality delivery depends on the lacuna between prospects and perceptions of actual level of performance. The five underlying dimensions of Service quality is are stated as follows: tangibles reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Bolton & Drew, 1991). The dimension of the service quality can be quantified by obtaining measures of expectations and perceptions of level of performance for each dimension, calculating the difference between expectations and perceptions of actual performance on these attributes, and then averaging across attributes. They also suggest that expectations should be influenced by personal needs, word-of-mouth communication, and past experiences (Parasuraman et al. 1985).

Customer retention

Customer retention could be determined from the satisfaction of derived from the quality service delivery by any service operator (Gustafsson, Johnson, & Roos, 2005). To understand the complexity of customer loyalty, it is important to understand the evaluations, attitudes, and intentions that affect behavior

(Oliver 1999). We focus on three prominent drivers are identified by Gustafsson et al., (2005:210) of “retention in the marketing literature: overall customer satisfaction, affective commitment, and calculative commitment”

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as a customer’s overall evaluation of the performance of an offering to date (Gustafsson et al., 2005). The overall satisfaction has a strong positive effect on customer loyalty intentions across a wide range of product and service categories, including telecommunications services. Historically, satisfaction has been used to explain loyalty as behavioral intentions (e.g., the likelihood of repurchasing and recommending) (Gustafsson et al., 2005). Bolton and Lemon (1999) show a positive effect of overall satisfaction on customer usage of telecommunications subscription services. Additionally, there is growing managerial interest in customer satisfaction as a means of evaluating quality (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). High customer satisfaction ratings are “widely believed to be the best indices of a company's future profits (Kotler 1991:19). Firms increasingly use custom satisfaction as a criterion for diagnosing product or service performance and often customer satisfaction ratings to both executive and employee of the company

(Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). The bellow diagram represents the customer satisfaction index by Fornell, Johnson, Anderson and Bryant (1996).

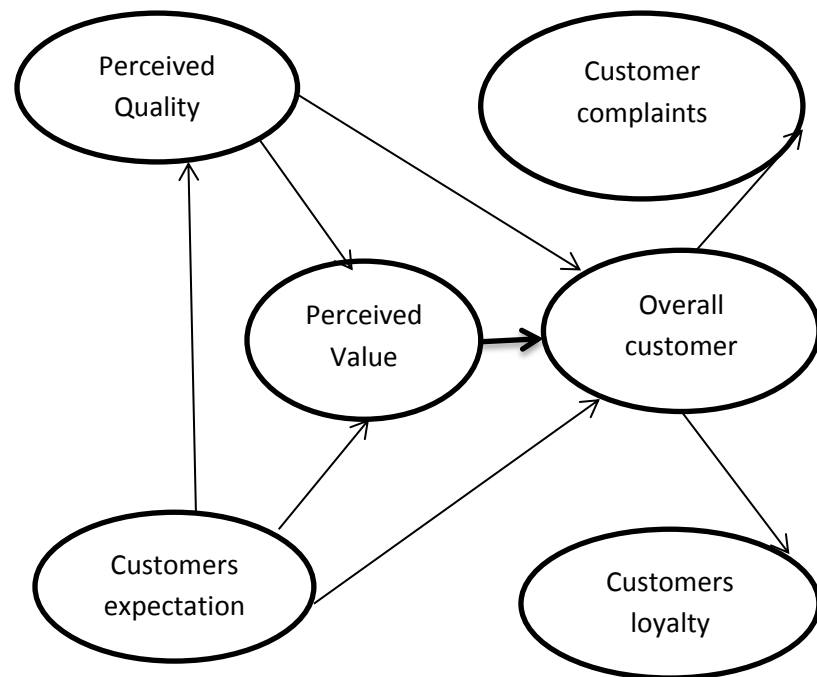


Figure 1.1 customer satisfaction index adopted from (Fornell et al., 1996)

Customer’s behavioural intention

The indicators of behavioral intentions are important for service companies in Nigeria. Theory suggests that growing customer retention, or reducing the rate of customer defection through quality service delivery is a major key to the ability of a service provider to make returns (Cronin, Brady, Hult, &

Tomas, 2000) Specifically, Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) as stated in Cronin et al. (2000:205) suggest that favorable behavioral intentions are associated with a service provider's ability to get its customers to "(1) say positive things about them, 2) recommend them to other consumers, 3) remain loyal to them (i.e., repurchase from them), 4) spend more with the company, and 5) pay price premiums. We used three items to measure this construct that are similar to the domains assessed in the first four of these five outcomes".

presented here holds on an analysis of discourses within the range of documentary evidence and is based upon an examination of major publications and materials emanating from the professional accounting bodies and academic research carried out in the past. This study recommends for empirical research in this field about the perception of customer care department and selected customers about their dissatisfaction with the various service providers. This paper is purely a conceptual review.

Study Framework and Methodology

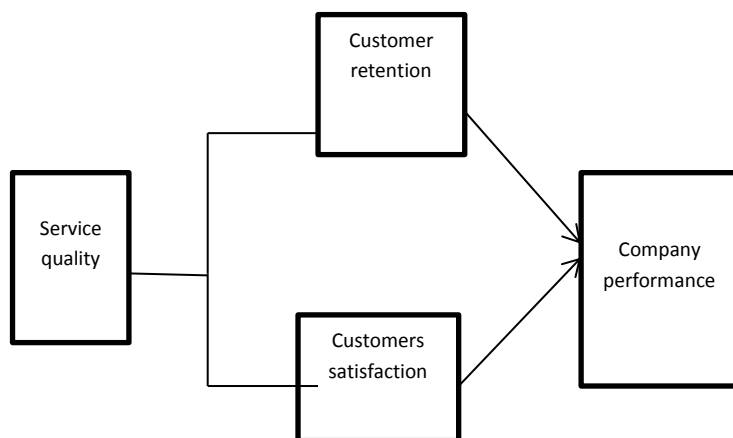


Figure 1.2 Customer Care Effectiveness

The methodology adopted for this write up in the context of customer care effectiveness. The paper adopts review approach. The research

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this paper is to bring out issues and concepts customer care effectiveness in general and its relationship to performance of telecommunication companies in Nigeria. The write up Identifies that there will be more customer loyalty if customer is satisfied with the services rendered. Meanwhile, the following recommendations are essentials;

- Introduce awareness programme to the public on the new service availability
- Training and retraining of customer care representatives should be encouraged
- The government should prescribe punishment for lack of delivering quality service to her customers.

- Academic, professional, and education curriculum should inculcate customer care effectiveness and customer relation.

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